DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 365 013 EC 302 638

AUTHOR Roundtree, Johnny M.
TITLE Increasing Parental Involvement through Active Participation with Parents of Fifth Grade Students in an Integrated Mainstreamed Classroom.
PUB DATE 1 Apr 93
NOTE 63p.; Ed.D. Practicum Report, Nova University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Attitude Change; Behavior Change; Elementary School Students; *Evening Programs; Grade 5; High Risk Students; Intermediate Grades; Mainstreaming; Parent Attitudes; *Parent Participation; Parent School Relationship; Parent Student Relationship; Program Effectiveness; *Special Needs Students; *Workshops

ABSTRACT

This practicum focused on the problem of lack of involvement of the parents of 32 mainstreamed fifth grade students with special learning needs. Evening workshops were conducted for parents and their at-risk, mainstreamed students in fifth grade. Sessions focused on the use of computers, manipulatives, make and take home instructional games, study skills and test-taking tips, and organizational skills. The practicum resulted in significant increases in parent participation. Several parents reported gaining significant insight on ways to assist their child in learning. Parents reported enjoying the opportunity to participate in the workshops. Appendices contain survey forms and other materials used in implementing the practicum. (Contains 24 references.) (JDD)

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# Increasing Parental Involvement Through Active Participation with Parents of Fifth Grade Students in an Integrated Mainstreamed Classroom

by

Johnny M. Roundtree

Cluster 45

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A Practicum I Report presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1993

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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This practicum was submitted by Johnny Roundtree under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

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3-29-93
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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Special thanks to my wife Gailyn P. Roundtree and children Danielle and Daniel for all of your support. I sincerely thank my mother Jeanie Roundtree for her inspiration and Pastor Amos Hill, First lady Beverly Hill and the members of the Last Day Deliverance Church family.

In addition, a special thanks to Mrs. Barbara V. Bell, Principal, Mrs. Noreen Virgin, Assistant Principal, staff members, participating parents and fifth graders that attended evening workshop sessions.

Finally, it is with honor that the writer sends accolades to Mary Staggs, Ed.D., practicum adviser for all of her support, concern and caring shown during the midst of Hurricane Andrew.

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## ABSTRACT

Increasing Parental Involvement Through Active Participation With Parents of Fifth Grade Students In an Integrated Mainstreamed Classroom. Roundtree, Johnny M., 1993: Practicum I Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Descriptors: Parent Involvement/Parent Participation/Parent Teacher Partnerships/Parent-School Relationship/Mainstreaming/At-Risk Students/

This practicum was designed to provide eleven innovative instructional evening workshops for parents of at-risk fifth graders that were assigned to an integrated mainstreamed classroom. Parents received hands-on computer instruction, suggested ideas to better assist their child with schoolwide science projects and effective study skill techniques.

The writer forwarded letters and interest surveys to parents; administered questionnaires; offered evening workshops; provided hand outs on study tips and suggestions for parents to utilize with their child in the home-learning environment.

Analysis of the data revealed that the practicum was effective in addressing the needs of parents with an at-risk low achieving or exceptional education student through evening workshop sessions. Parents reported that the sessions were beneficial in many ways.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### Description of Work Setting and Community

The work setting for the writer was an elementary school that opened in 1986 in a large metropolitan suburban area. The facility originally designed to accommodate 900 students, housed 1,266 students in grade levels kindergarten through fifth.

Six portable classrooms were constructed on the school site to accommodate the rapidly growing student population. The ethnic background of the student body totaled 80% Hispanic, 18% Anglo, 1% Black non-Hispanic, and 1% Asian or American Indian.

The school received its student population from a diverse Hispanic neighborhood. Middle class Hispanics resided in single family homes located on the south side of the school. Several students lived with their families in an apartment complex located on the north side of the school, while others of a lower-socioeconomic status resided in a neighborhood trailer park located within a two mile radius of the school's boundary. The American Indian students arrived daily by bus from the reservation; whereas, the Black students arrived with their parents who were members of the staff.

The total school program consisted of three administrators: principal, assistant principal, and an administrative assistant. The instructional personnel totaled 59 classroom teachers, of which 45% had Master Degrees. Student support personnel consisted of two counselors, one speech therapist, one media specialist, an assistant clerical aide, one instructional management specialist, two teacher assistants, four support staff personnel, and seven custodial service employees.

In addition to the regular curriculum, Spanish for Speakers of Other Languages, Spanish for Spanish Speakers, English for Speakers of Other Languages, Bilingual Curriculum Content, Art, Speech Therapy, Music, Special Education, Alternative Education, two integrated mainstreamed classroom units and Physical Education were also offered to the students. Before and after school care was available for a minimal fee.

In relation to schoolwide issues, staff input, parental suggestions and students' concerns were generally considered in the decision making process. Staff members were involved in the development of the school's philosophy, mission statement, discipline plan and the homework policy.

## Writer's Work Setting and Role

During content area instruction in science and social studies, the writer and an exceptional education

teacher, joined forces in a team teaching situation involving the total population of 32 students. This integrated instructional model combined the 18 students at-risk, along with the 14 learning disabled students twice weekly within a self contained classroom.

In addition to the daily responsibilities of teaching, the writer served as the school's liaison and designated union building steward. This position enabled the writer to actively participate on various school improvement committees, task forces and projects that extended beyond the regular scheduled day. As union steward, the writer attended district level workshops representing staff concerns in the School Based Management/Shared Decision making process.

Monthly meetings were attended by the writer to receive information for dissemination amongst staff members concerning the educational budget, employee benefits and pertinent issues of concern. The writer conducted monthly union membership meetings to update members about decisions agreed upon between the school district and union representatives.

# CHAPTER II

# STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

## Problem Description

The problem in this practicum was that the parents (the primary target group) of 32 fifth graders with special learning needs assigned to an innovative integrated mainstreamed classroom, repeatedly failed to participate in school-related activities. Whereas the regular fifth grade classes had approximately 25% overall participation at various schoolwide events, such as open house, it was observed that only 10% of the parents of students in the writer's class attended many school-related functions. The problem was that parental participation at the intermediate grade level was low, particularly, parents of the at-risk and exceptional education students.

## Problem Documentation

Evidence of the problem was supported by observations, surveys, needs assessments and interviews. The writer and fellow intermediate co-workers observed and compiled grade level reports, indicating that 75% of parents of primary level students (Kindergarten through grade 3), participated in various schoolwide activities (e.g., open house, science fair, fundraisers), in comparison to approximately 25% overall participation in intermediate (grades four and five).

Schoolwide parental participation surveys (K-5), further indicated that a problem was evident at the intermediate level. More specifically, upon interviewing students in the writer's class, 80% revealed that their parents had other priorities limiting their active participation in school-related activities. In addition to documented proof of the problem, 100% of the writer's class had psychological and case management referrals on file, indicating that parental support was warranted.

A parental participation survey consisting of 10 questions was sent to 32 homes of the children in the writer's fifth grade class. The survey was to determine how many parents were interested in attending evening workshops on a variety of subjects. Parents were to respond to 10 survey items and return the information to the school. Only 22 parents complied. The results are indicated in Table 1. Based on the results of the survey, it was evident that parents were interested in attending evening workshops.

Table 1

**Parental Participation Survey**

| | | Results | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Yes | No |
| 1. | I am interested in participating with my child in evening workshops to assist him/her in school. | 15 | 7 |
| 2. | I would like to attend scheduled evening workshops to learn how I can assist my child with science projects. | 15 | 7 |
| 3. | I would like to learn how a computer program can help my child with school work. | 19 | 3 |
| 4. | I am interested in learning ways to assist my child with homework. | 18 | 4 |
| 5. | I am interested in learning ways on how to improve my communications with my child's teacher. | 19 | 3 |
| 6. | I would like to participate in an evening "make and take home" workshop to discover ways to work with my child. | 16 | 6 |
| 7. | I am interested in attending an evening reading lab workshop to assist my child with assignments. | 15 | 7 |
| 8. | I would like to attend evening workshops on ways to assist my child with organizational skills to help him/her prepare for school, home, and daily tasks. | 15 | 7 |
| 9. | I would like to attend an evening workshop to learn about test-taking tips to assist my child with preparation for standardized testing procedures. | 15 | 7 |
| 10. | I am interested in attending an evening workshop to find out about available community resources (e.g., seminars, and workshops) to keep me informed on ways to effectively help my child. | 16 | 6 |

## Causative Analysis

It was the writer's belief that there were three causes of the problem. Based on early school experiences, the writer noticed that parents of at-risk and exceptional education children, typically feared telephone calls, parent teacher conferences and written notices pertaining to their child's academic progress. In at least 50% of the phone calls made by the writer, several of the parents took the time to reflect on the negatives in their child. In five out of 18 calls, parents immediately questioned, "What did my child do now?" Although a problem may have existed the writer often focused on the positives in hopes of bridging the gap between the home and school.

Parent teacher conferences revealed a similar pattern whereby parents appeared somewhat fearful in expressing themselves. This could have been attributed to the lack of English proficiency in at least 20% of the parents. Parents often relied on the school to provide the solutions to the problem.

Finally, parents with intermediate aged students returned to the work force once the child reached the upper elementary level. As a result, the intermediate teacher seeking parental support incurred problems in securing a homeroom parent to volunteer time in the classroom. In contrast, it was noticed that on a daily basis parents of primary level students were actively involved in the total

school program.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Demands of America's global society continue to impact reform efforts in schools across the nation. In addition to providing a basic curriculum in mathematics, reading and writing, schools now assume many responsibilities that parents had several years ago.

During the past decade global problems have significantly changed the basic structure of the American family, schools and the role of parents as providers in the home. Carlson (1990) attributes three factors that directly affect students and school performance. They are:

1. increases in the single parent family structure,
2. a 70% increase in both parents working within the nuclear family, and;
3. increases in the divorce rate affecting over 460,000 children since 1960.

Levine (1988) reports that 65% of women with school-aged children are employed full-time, making it difficult for them to actively participate in school activities during the regular scheduled day.

Hofferth (1987) predicts that by 1995, working mothers of school-aged children are expected to rise from three-fifths to three-fourths. In addition, research by Hofferth pinpoints that parental divorce and separation has had a major impact on the lives of many children. It is

anticipated that with the steady rise and drastic changes in the traditional American family, schools will continue to face many challenges in educating children.

## CHAPTER III

## ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

### Goals and Expectations

The primary goal of this practicum was to increase the participation of parents with fifth grade at-risk students assigned to an integrated mainstreamed classroom. The writer feels that involving parents in schoolwide events is vitally important towards making a difference in student achievement. It was also expected that parents would develop innovative instructional strategies, that ultimately would improve the home-learning environment.

### Behavioral Objectives

The following objectives were projected for this practicum:

Objective 1: At the end of 12 weeks, parents of students assigned to the writer's integrated mainstreamed classroom, will show an increase in participation as measured by weekly sign-in sheets and daily logs.

Objective 2: At the end of 12 weeks, participating parents, after attending evening workshop sessions will gain insight on innovative instructional strategies to utilize in the home-learning environment.

Objective 3: At the end of 12 weeks, participating parents, after having been instructed will demonstrate an appreciation for evening workshop sessions, as measured by

the results of a post evaluation questionnaire.

## Measurement of Outcomes

Outcomes were measured throughout the implementation phase utilizing four different methods.

1. A weekly sign-in sheet for participating parents, students and any unexpected guests attending evening sessions was utilized (see Appendix D).

2. Daily logs consisting of the names of all workshop participants and significant comments made at each session was maintained (see Appendix E). This data was used in the midpoint and final reports of this practicum.

3. The writer computed the total number of parents who initially indicated that they would attend, in comparison to the actual number of participants. This would prove to be a vital method for documenting any significant gains in parental involvement.

4. A post evaluation was administered in the twelfth week (see Appendix H) following the implementation of this practicum. The writer compiled the data in order to determine an increase or decrease in parental participation.

# CHAPTER IV

## SOLUTION STRATEGY

### Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

The problem was that parents of intermediate at-risk and exceptional education students repeatedly failed to participate in schoolwide activities.

The literature offered a variety of solutions to encourage parents to assist educators as partners in the teaching-learning process. These solutions ranged from suggestions to accommodate the working parent by providing evening programs and workshops to making available the necessary instructional tools for parents to implement in a home-learning environment.

Partnerships involving school personnel, parents, and students are essential in accomplishing the many challenges facing our schools. According to Merenda (1989), the term "Partnership Movement" became widespread in many schools across America by involving small businesses, large corporations, governmental agencies, and parents working together to improve the quality of education.

Research findings in a U.S. Department of Education publication, What Works, authorized by then Secretary of Education, Bennet (1986), revealed that parents are their children's first and most influential teachers. The

findings also suggest that parents can make a significant difference if provided the time and instructional resources to do so.

Although there are those who respond negatively about the undertaking of a partnership program with parents, Beale (1985) proclaims that open-lines of communication will benefit everyone: administrators, teachers, parents and their children. Numerous studies indicate that parental involvement has proven beneficial in increasing student achievement, decreasing absenteeism, and in developing a better working relationship between the home and school (Tangri & Moles, 1987; Henderson, 1988; Obrien, 1989; Stanic & Secada, 1989; Walberg, 1984).

In America today, global problems and changes in the demographic and economic trends continue to increase the growing number of children that are at-risk for educational failure. There exists a need for educators to empower parents with instructional strategies and incentives towards successful achievement. King (1989) suggests that schools provide flexible schedules of events enabling the employed parent to attend. By providing evening programs and workshops to accommodate the working parent, researchers suggest that the invested efforts will be beneficial in many ways.

Empowerment is the epitome for the establishment of mutual trust and cooperation between parents and teachers

(Rasinski & Fredericks, 1988). In an effort to empower parents with learning strategies and skills to be used in the home with their children, Allen and Freitag (1988) suggest evening workshops that cover a variety of skills which should be grouped in ten categories:

a. goal setting
b. homework completion
c. organizational skills
d. time management
e. study environment
f. note-taking techniques
g. following directions to complete a task
h. test-taking and preparation skills
i. listening skills, and
j. providing follow-up suggestions to parents

A series of evening workshop sessions, where parents can be taught several strategies to assist their child, as well as, how to better understand the concepts of individual learning styles, can be rewarding in many ways. Some of the studies that suggest workshop ideas for parents are: Rickelman and Henk's (1991) study of computer instruction involving hardware and software uses, including academic resources; Goldstein and Campbell (1991) study of usage of everyday materials to make instructional mathematic games; Vukelich (1989) study of hands-on activities, games and a variety of instructional materials;

Hunter (1989), Ashlock (1990) suggest a series of at-home role playing and make-and-take mathematic activities; Rich and Goldstein (1988), Holland (1990) suggest a series of make-and-take reading activities.

It was the writer's intent to employ all of these solutions to avoid a lack of parental participation. In addition, Hibpshman, Strickland & Morrow (1990) suggest community resources, such as the public library, as an excellent vehicle through which parents can assist in their child's learning. The writer was particularly interested in four of the seven possible solutions to obstacles which parents use as an excuse for lack of participation in evening workshops (Allen & Freitag, 1988). It was the writer's intent to employ all of these solutions to avoid a lack of parental participation.

| Obstacles to Participation | Possible Solutions |
|---|---|
| 1. Lack of information about the evening workshops. | Notify parents in the school's weekly newsletter. Send home flyers reminding parents about upcoming events. |
| 2. Lack of child care. | Call on volunteers to assist in the child care of participants attending workshops (possibly inviting a grandparent to assist). |

| | |
|---|---|
| 3. Lack of transportation. | Encourage participants to volunteer their assistance in providing transportation to any participant in need. |
| 4. Parental insecurity due to negative experiences as students. | Personally notify any reluctant participant to attend. Make an effort to call on any reluctant participant to become actively involved in the sessions. |

In schools servicing a wide range of students from different socioeconomic backgrounds, researchers indicate that less-well-educated parents and those lacking social skills are often reluctant about participation in school-related activities. As a solution, parental involvement can be established in an attempt to alleviate many kinds of problems. Comer (1986) suggests that parents and people in the community be invited to assist educators in the teaching-learning process. Participation in school related activities such as serving on steering committees, tutoring small groups of children and additional services have proven to be beneficial. Comer's study revealed significant increases in student attendance and academic performance. The findings further support the need for active involvement of parents, regardless of their background, educational level, or socioeconomic status.

## Description of Selected Solution

The literature provided several strategies or suggestions which in the writer's opinion could be utilized to increase parental involvement and participation in schoolwide events, while providing instructional methods to implement in the home-learning environment. Researchers Allen and Freitag (1988) suggested evening workshops for parents that covered the categories of goal setting, homework completion, organizational skills, time management, study environment, notetaking techniques, following directions to complete a task, test-taking and preparation skills, and suggestions provided to parents.

Rickelman and Henk (1991) suggested evening courses for parents utilizing the computer, software, equipment and available instructional resources. Vukelich recommended that courses and workshops be provided for parents utilizing hands-on activities, games, and instructional materials to be implemented in the home.

Goldstein and Campbell (1991) proposed that parenting workshops, providing reusable materials to make instructional games, have proven to be essential as home-learning tools. In a study of high-risk parents, Goldstein and Campbell (1991) report that parent workshops utilizing simple materials promote parental support towards classwork completion.

Hunter (1989) and Ashlock (1990) offered a variety of suggestions for parents to assist in at-home math activities. Rich (1988) and Holland (1990) suggested a variety of resources for parents that could strengthen the at-home reading program.

The writer chose to employ the solutions of providing evening workshops for parents accompanied with their child. Evening workshop sessions focused on the use of computers, manipulatives, make and take home instructional game activities, study and test-taking tips, and organizational skills to assist the students within the target populaton. Additionally, this solution was selected because the writer felt that these strategies were necessary to empower parents with innovative techniques to assist their child in the home learning environment. The selected solution would have a positive effect on the students in the mainstreamed classroom, and the use of these solutions would improve parent's relationships with their child, while bridging the gap between the home and school. These solutions addressed the problem in this practicum and would achieve the stated objectives.

During a period of eleven evening workshop sessions, parents and their fifth grader assigned to the writer's integrate' mainstreamed classroom assembled in the school's media center for weekly sessions. Evaluation of the objectives took place twelve weeks from the day that

implementation began. The writer's role was that of teacher, facilitator and motivator for participating parents that attended the workshops.

## Report of Action Taken

The writer met with the school-site administrators: principal and assistant principal, and the intermediate level counselor to discuss the strategies which would be utilized to address the needs of the targeted "at-risk" students, with the support of their parents. The writer received an overwhelming amount of support and permission was granted by the principal.

The writer explained the information about the workshops to 32 students assigned in the integrated mainstreamed class. As part of an on-going writing activity, students wrote and designed invitations encouraging their parents to participate. Additionally, a parent letter was attached from the writer outlining the goals and objectives of the program (Appendix A). In addition, parents received a plan of action (Appendix B) outlining information about each evening session to allow them to determine whether or not they would be interested in the planned workshops. The response letters were recorded by the writer and returned to the parents. A survey was sent to the home for parents to complete and return (Appendix C). The results were shared with the

school-site administrators.

Flyers announcing the weekly parenting sessions were sent home by the students (Appendix G). The writer and a Spanish-speaking aide followed up with a phone call to any parent that did not fully understand the intent of the correspondence. Confirmed dates were secured from additional workshop presenters: counselor, exceptional education teacher and school-site administrators. Hand-out materials for each parenting session were printed by the writer. The school's media center was reserved as the meeting place for workshops.

The opening session of evening workshops was devoted to assisting parents with preparation for science projects to be presented in a schoolwide science fair. The writer and the Spanish-speaking exceptional education instructor, explained the eleven week program to the predominantly Hispanic audience. During sessions one and two; goal setting; organizational skills; and time management techniques were discussed. Parents and students worked together to complete the scientific process.

The third and fourth evening workshop session provided hands-on experiences in the school's computer lab. Parents worked in pairs on the computer to become familiar with the equipment and available instructional software. Parents received handouts of suggestions prepared by the writer, on ways to use computers in the home-learning

environment.

Strategy session five provided suggestions to better prepare students and parents with test-taking tips. Participating parents worked with their child in a simulation of testing strategies, while reviewing materials in preparation for the Stanford Achievement Test.

The sixth step provided participating parents with ideas and suggestions in order to establish an in-home learning and study environment. Parents discovered innovative ways to assist their children with homework. The school counselor spoke to the group about routine studying in a quiet location within the home. Participating parents answered four questions pertaining to workshops attended. The compiled data was utilized by the writer in the mid-point evaluation (Appendix F).

The seventh stage provided "make and take home" reading games and activities for participants. Newspapers, maps and other resources were used to make reading instructional games for use in the home-learning environment. Participants were provided time to demonstrate how the games can be implemented and used effectively.

Effective ways for parents to communicate with their children was provided in the eighth stage. Participants viewed a video that was provided by the school counselor

concerning effective communicating techniques. Parents were grouped with their child in a heart to heart talk, applying effective listening, goal setting and communication strategies. Parents participated in role-playing situations concerning better ways to communicate.

Hands-on make and take home mathematic instructional games and activities were provided for participants that attended the ninth session. Using a variety of basic at-home essentials such as egg cartons, plastic containers and shoe boxes, participants were encouraged to make several games to reinforce mathematics in the home-learning environment.

The tenth activity provided insight on goal setting and organizational skills. Guest speakers from the local middle school spoke to the group about setting goals and preparation for the upcoming school year. Participants were provided the opportunity to ask questions.

The eleventh week of the program provided an informative discussion of available resources in the community public library. Guest speakers from the library spoke to the group. Parents discovered Bibliotherapy: A book for all situations (i.e., *How to Deal with Divorce, Crime, Alcohol*). Participants obtained library cards to use at all public library facilities. Parents completed a post evaluative instrument pertaining to evening workshops,

guest speakers, and any personal comments concerning the sessions attended. Responses from participating parents are noted (Appendix H).

The culminating evening ceremony was held for participants and their families. Certificates were awarded to parents that attended at least five workshop sessions. Special quest presenters were invited to participate and receive certificates and special thanks. Participating parents and students were provided time to reflect on their experiences during the workshops. Printed hand out materials pertaining to follow-up suggestions and ideas were provided to all participating parents.

During the three months of this practicum three unexpected events occurred which caused a slight change in scheduled plans. A change of meeting nights occurred twice as a result of an electrical problem in the school community. Another unexpected event arose 24 when a scheduled field trip, (for week eight), to the community library during the school day was cancelled. Fortunately, a representative from the library came out to speak to the group at session eleven. Generally, the implementation of this practicum proceeded as scheduled.

# CHAPTER V

## RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Results

The problem in the writer's work setting was that parental participation at the intermediate grade level was low, particularly, parents of at-risk and exceptional education students assigned to the writer's integrated mainstreamed classroom. There were several causes of the problem. One major factor which related to the problem was that parents had other priorities during the regular scheduled day, that limited their active participation in school-related activities. In addition, based on early school experiences, several parents of at-risk students, typically feared telephone calls and parent-teacher conferences pertaining to their child's academic progress. This can be attributed to a lack of confidence to communicate with school personnel.

The solution to this problem was to accommodate the working, reluctant and insecure parent by offering evening workshop sessions, in hopes of increasing parental involvement amongst parents with a preadolescent "at-risk" child. This solution was selected because the writer firmly believes that parents are needed to make a significant difference in their child's education,

specifically, parents with an "at-risk" child. Additionally, the selected solution would have a positive effect on the parents and students assigned to the writer's integrated mainstreamed classroom. Furthermore, the solution would begin to develop a partnership between the school, parent and students by empowering parents with instructional strategies, to better assist their children in the home-learning environment.

The goal of this practicum was that parental involvement at the intermediate level, specifically, parents of the 32 students assigned to the writer's class would improve considerably. The goal would be obtained by providing evening workshops for parents and students. Specific objectives were developed to achieve the goals. The following list includes each objective and the results related to each objective.

Objective 1: It was projected that at the end of the 12 week implementation period, there would be an increase in parental involvement and participation, as measured by the results of weekly sign-in sheets. Prior to the implementation of this practicum, an average of 3 to 4 intermediate parents of students assigned to the writer's fifth grade class, attended two programs that were scheduled during the regular school day. Table 2 shows the results of this objective as a significant increase in parental involvement throughout the 11-week evening

workshop sessions.

Table 2

Attendance Record

| Weekly Attendance | Parents | Students |
|---|---|---|
| Session 1 | 7 | 7 |
| Session 2 | 7 | 7 |
| Session 3* | 11 | 13 |
| Session 4* | 14 | 17 |
| Session 5 | 7 | 7 |
| Session 6 | 5 | 6 |
| Session 7* | 12 | 14 |
| Session 8 | 5 | 7 |
| Session 9* | 10 | 15 |
| Session 10 | 8 | 10 |
| Session 11 | 7 | 9 |
| Total Average | 8.5 | 10.2 |

* denotes high interest level in workshop sessions

The results revealed a significant increase from parents who participated in evening workshop sessions. Furthermore, the results revealed that both parents and students were highly motivated to attend the sessions covering hands-on computer experiences and make-and-take home projects.

Objective 2. It was projected that at the end of the

12-week implementation period, participating parents would gain insight on innovative ways to better assist their child in the home-learning environment. Based on the results of a post evaluative questionnaire completed at the culminating ceremony in week twelve, significant insight was gained by 11 parents who attended at least three sessions throughout the implementation period.

Table 3

Response to Parent Post Evaluation Questionnaire

| Questions 1 - 5 | Results | |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No |
| 1. I have more confidence in myself as a parent. | 11 | 0 |
| 2. My ability to communicate with my child has improved. | 11 | 0 |
| 3. I have gained knowledge concerning ways in which I can effectively assist in the education of my child. | 11 | 0 |
| 4. I have a better understanding of my role as a parent. | 12 | 0 |
| 5. I am interested in participating in more school-related activities. | 11 | 0 |

The results revealed a significant increase in insight gained by participating parents who attended an average of three workshop sessions throughout the eleven week project.

Objective 3. It was projected that at the end of the 12-week implementation period, participating parents would express an appreciation for evening workshop sessions.

Based on the comments received, both verbal and written correspondence revealed that parents sincerely enjoyed the opportunity to actively participate in evening workshop sessions (Appendix I).

## Discussion

There were several authors whose literature on innovative ways to increase parental involvement provided a spark for the writer in an effort to address the needs of the target population.

Allen and Freitag (1988) topics of discussion, provided the direction to develop workshop sessions in an effort to empower parents with concepts to better assist their children in the home-learning environment. King (1989) reminded this writer that if schools truly want to involve the working parent, then it is incumbent to offer evening programs and workshops as an open invitation for families.

Rickelman and Henk (1991) urged the use of technology for parents. The writer found that evening workshops provided an opportunity for those parents who may not have had the access to the use of computers in the home the opportunity to share the experience with their children.

Vukelich's (1984) suggestion of "make-and-take-home" instructional activities was successful. This provided an avenue for parents to have materials that would reinforce

reading and mathematics skills that are taught in school.

The literature of these authors enabled the writer to stimulate an interest in parental involvement. Ultimately, participating parents developed a better understanding on ways to assist their child, while participating as an active partner in the educational process.

## Recommendations

The writer has completed a practicum project that was successful. As a result of the success, the writer believes that the recommendations that follow will enable future workshop sessions to experience similar outcomes. Workshop presenters should:

1. encourage parents with a child at the intermediate level to resume a more active role in their child's education;
2. continue to assist parents with literature on ways to better understand their child during the preadolescent years;
3. provide additional evening workshops and special events to involve the working parent in school-related activities;
4. call on parents to share their job-related experiences with intermediate students;
5. provide hands-on activities that parents can use in the home to work with their child;

6. offer a listening ear to families that are willing to work as partners in their child's education;
7. focus on the positive aspects of the intermediate at-risk student;
8. continue to focus on projects to involve parents as partners in their child's education.

## Dissemination

As a spin-off from this practicum project, the writer wrote and received a grant to implement a schoolwide parenting program earmarked to address the needs of the at-risk child. Five hundred dollars was received from Citicorp Educational Fund to provide at least four evening workshop sessions to be implemented during the 1992-93 school year.

A copy of the final practicum report will be placed in the school's media center upon approval. The writer's intent is to provide professional colleagues with a stimulating idea of possible solutions, to encourage parental involvement at all grade levels. Furthermore, the writer hopes to extend this practicum project as a major concept throughout the school district.

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# APPENDICES

# APPENDIX A

## LETTER TO PARENTS

## APPENDIX A

## LETTER TO PARENTS

Dear Parents,

We are planning to offer evening workshops to assist parents of our children with special learning needs. Parents are their children's first and most influential teachers, and we are seeking your support in helping our children achieve. It is equally important that we work together as partners to encourage our children towards success.

Each year parents often ask, what can they do to help their child at home? The answer is involvement in evening workshops, allowing parents and their child to learn and achieve together.

Evening workshop sessions will be held on Tuesdays, from 7:30-9:00 p.m. upstairs in the media center. Kindly take a moment to indicate which sessions that you and your child are planning to attend. Return the attached notice to your child's teacher. I am looking forward to working with each of you.

Thanks in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

Johnny M. Roundtree
Fifth Grade Teacher

# APPENDIX B

# PLAN OF ACTION

APPENDIX B

PLAN OF ACTION

| Topics | Planning to attend | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No | Uncertain |
| Sessions One-Two<br>"The Scientific Process"<br>Parents will discover ways to assist their child with science projects. | | | |
| Sessions Three-Four<br>Computer lab workshops. Parents will be provided with "hands-on experiences" using the computer in order to discover ways that software programs can help their children in school. | | | |
| Session Five<br>Parents and students will find out important test-taking techniques and preparations. | | | |
| Session Six<br>Homework lab workshops. Parents and students will gain insight on effective "Homework and studying tips." | | | |
| Session Seven<br>The "Mathematics Clinic". Parents and students will make and take home instructional mathematics games. | | | |
| Session Eight<br>"Reading lab workshop". Parents will discover ways to help with completion of reading assignments. | | | |
| Session Nine<br>Parent and teacher conferences. Through role-playing, parents will discover ways to communicate effectively with their children's teacher(s). | | | |

APPENDIX B continued

PLAN OF ACTION

Session Ten
Parents and students will discover the importance of organizational skills to help prepare for school, home, and daily task.

Session Eleven
Parents and students will be informed of available resources in the community public library.

# APPENDIX C

# PARENT PARTICIPATION SURVEY

# APPENDIX C

## PARENT PARTICIPATION SURVEY

Parental Participation Survey

1. I am interested in participating with my child in evening workshops to assist him/her in school.

2. I would like to attend scheduled evening workshops to learn how I can assist my child with science projects.

3. I would like to learn how a computer program can help my child with school work.

4. I am interested in learning ways to assist my child with homework.

5. I am interested in learning ways on how to improve my communications with my child's teacher.

6. I would like to participate in an evening "make and take home" workshop to discover ways to work with my child.

7. I am interested in attending an evening reading lab workshop to assist my child with assignments.

8. I would like to attend evening workshops on ways to assist my child with organizational skills to help him/her prepare for school, home, and daily tasks.

9. I would like to attend an evening workshop to learn about test-taking tips to assist my child with preparation for standardized testing procedures.

10. I am interested in attending an evening workshop to find out about available community resources (e.g., seminars, and workshops) to keep me informed on ways to effectively help my child.

APPENDIX D

WEEKLY SIGN-IN SHEET

APPENDIX D

WEEKLY SIGN-IN SHEET

## *Sign In Sheet*

***Date***

| *Parent's Name* | *Student's Name* |
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# APPENDIX E

# WEEKLY LOG AND DATA

# APPENDIX E

## WEEKLY LOG AND DATA

### Weekly Log and Data

Topic(s):_____

_____

Presenters:_____

_____

Comments from participating parents _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Any Unexpected event(s)_____

_____

_____

_____

# APPENDIX F

## MID-POINT EVALUATIVE INSTRUMENT

# APPENDIX F

## MID-POINT EVALUATIVE INSTRUMENT

Mid-Point Evaluative Instrument

Daily Weekly Attendance

Week One_____

Week Two_____

Week Three_____

Week Four_____

Week Five_____

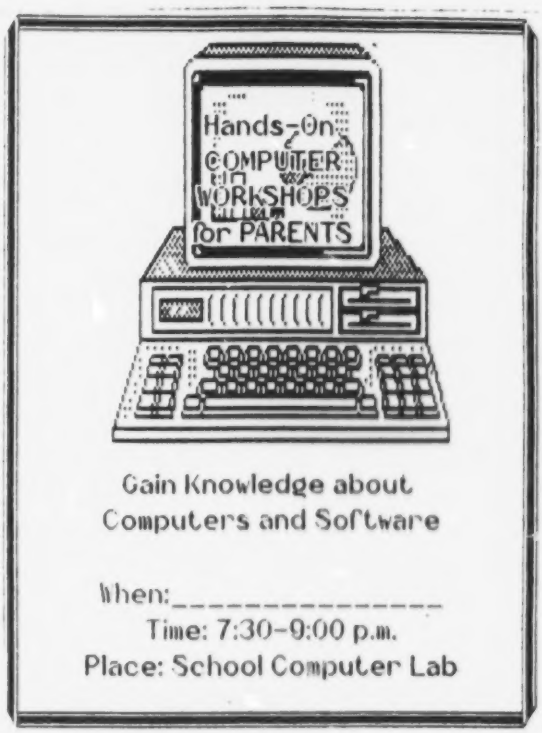
* Mid-point Average_____

# APPENDIX G

## WEEKLY FLYERS TO PARENTS

APPENDIX G

WEEKLY FLYERS TO PARENTS



APPENDIX G continued

WEEKLY FLYERS TO PARENTS

Parental Involvement

BE A TEST BUSTER

Parents and Students working together

Find out about:

1. Test-Taking Tips
2. Test Preparation
3. The importance of testing

When:_____

Time: 7:30-9:00 p.m.

Place: Media Center

Role Playing:

1. Parent-Teacher Conferences
2. Listening Skills
3. Parents as PARTNERS in Education

When:_____

Time: 7:30-9:00 p.m.

Place: Media Center

Parental Involvement

MATHEMATICS

Make and Take Home

PARENT WORKSHOP

When:_____

Time: 7:30-9:00 p.m.

Place: Media Center

Parental Involvement
Make a Difference in Your Child's Future!!!
Make and Take Home

READING WORKSHOP for Parents

When:_____

Time: 7:30-9:00 p.m.

Place: Media Center

APPENDIX H

POST EVALUATIVE INSTRUMENT

# APPENDIX H

## POST EVALUATIVE INSTRUMENT

**Parent Post Evaluation Questionnaire**

1. I have more confidence in myself as a parent.

yes___ no___

2. My ability to communicate with my child has improved.

yes___ no___

3. I have gained knowledge concerning ways in which I can effectively assist in the education of my child.

yes___ no___

4. I have a better understanding of my role as a parent.

yes___ no___

5. I am interested in participating in more school-related activities.

yes___ no___

6. In terms of assisting my child at home, the instructional materials provided were:

a. Excellent b. Very Good c. Good d. Fair e. Poor

7. The weekly evening workshop activities were:

a. Excellent b. Very Good c. Good d. Fair e. Poor



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

## APPENDIX H continued

## POST EVALUATIVE INSTRUMENT

8. The workshop presenter(s) were:

a. Excellent b. Very Good c. Good d. Fair e. Poor

9. I attended the indicated number of evening workshop sessions.

a. 1-2 b. 3-4 c. 5-6 d. 7-8 e. 9-11

10. I would recommend that future evening workshops be made available to parents:

a. Yes b. No

Additional comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

# APPENDIX I

## ANECDOTAL COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPATING PARENTS

# APPENDIX I

## ANECDOTAL COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPATING PARENTS

Parent #1: Keep up the good work!!!

Parent #2: The workshops were really needed and I hope there are more of this for us who needed them. They were helpful for the future of our kids.

Parent #3: I hope that the Middle School would provide workshops for us next year.

Parent #4: The workshops were great and we had a lot of fun.

Parent #5: My child and I learned a lot of new things and I thank Mr. Roundtree for helping me understand how to work with my child.

Parent #6: Thanks so much for having the workshops, Mr. Roundtree. I had fun, especially on the computers.

Parent #7: I really had fun and my son was so happy that his teacher was helping him after school hours.

Parent #8: The workshop presenters were good.

Parent #9: I wish that we have more meetings throughout the school year.